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ABSTRACT

A values exercise suitable for secondary school students is divided into three sections. The first section, an introduction to students, explains the concepts of and interrelationships between basic human needs, culture, values orientation, and global perspectives. The intent of the exercise, to help students appreciate how a set of value orientations is peculiar to a specific place and time, is also explained. The second section, the student exercise, describes 15 basic human concerns, organized under the headings of the individual, social relations, and nature and the supernatural. For each concern, students indicate where on a continuum they believe the majority of people in their own community stand on the issue. Examples of the concerns considered are belief in fate, sex roles, decision-making, personal values, friendship, conflict resolution, concern for the past, family ties, and material values. A final section contains a leader's guide for the student exercise. Information on learning objectives, materials, preparation, time and space requirements is provided, as are step-by-step procedures for group discussion. What is assumed to be the general consensus of professional sociologists, anthropologists, and researchers regarding the placement of the United States as a whole on each of the 15 scales is summarized. (LP)

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VALUE ORIENTATIONS

(and)

LEADER'S GUIDE FOR THE ORIENTATIONS EXERCISE

developed in 1982 by

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AFS International/Intercultural Programs

VALUE ORIENTATIONS

When we take a broad view of human life on this planet from prehistoric times to the present, we might conclude that all people at all times and places have certain *basic concerns*. These are universal problems involving the way people view themselves as individuals, their relationships with others, and their relation to the natural and supernatural world in which they live.

If we think about these basic human concerns, we will realize that each one has a number of possible solutions. For example, one concern that must be faced by all people at all times and places may be expressed by this question: "To whom does an individual have primary responsibility?" Three possible ways of answering this question (dealing with this concern) are the following: (1) The individual is primarily responsible to himself or herself. (2) The individual is primarily responsible to other people such as family members or close friends. (3) The individual is primarily responsible to a Supreme Being or philosophic ideal.

There are many, many other basic human concerns, and *all* of them have a *variety* of possible answers. There are complex reasons why the people living together at any given time and place settle on this or that answer for each of the basic concerns. We can be sure, however, that the answer selected in each case has survival value for them, and that all of their answers taken together constitute a pattern and integrated whole that is not only *meaningful*, but also *workable* for them. This patterned, integrated whole is what we refer to as the *culture* of that particular group of people.

The ways in which any given group of people deal with these basic concerns also have been termed that people's *value orientations*. The value orientations that prevail in any society have an enormous influence on the daily lives of the individual members of that society, for they are the shared "rules" or "recipes" that govern their habits of thought and patterns of behavior moment after moment.

One way in which you can gain a more thorough understanding of yourself and your culture is to determine some of the value orientations that prevail at the time and place that you are living. This may not be easy. Various individuals, families, occupational groups, and subcultures within your society may disagree about some of the value orientations. The best approach may be to consider not your entire society but rather your own home community *as a whole*. You should be able to identify, *in general terms*, its value orientations by focusing on the habits of thought and patterns of behavior that tend to prevail among the people who are in the *"main stream"* of life and work. In other words, you should focus on the values of those members of your community (probably, but not necessarily, a majority) who seem to set the norms and standards by which others live.

The exercise that follows gives you an opportunity to do this with respect to fifteen of the basic human concerns. *The most difficult aspect of this exercise will be trying to view your community in world-wide perspective*, that is, to identify its dominant value orientations not merely in relation to the range of thoughts and behaviors that are tolerated there, but in relation to the whole sweep of possibilities open to human beings anytime, anywhere. If you can do this, however, you should come to appreciate more fully *how peculiar to a specific time and place* are the set of value orientations by which you live.

DIRECTIONS: Fifteen basic human concerns have been organized below under three general headings:

I. The Individual (6 concerns)

II. Social Relationships (6 concerns)

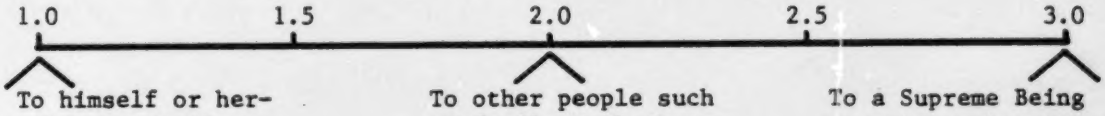
III. Nature and the Supernatural (3 concerns)

For each concern, mark the point of the continuum that seems to come closest to describing the value orientation that is characteristic, *on the whole, of people who are in the main stream of life and work in your home community.*

Note that you also may be given directions to mark the point on each continuum that describes the value orientation that is characteristic of some other community (such as your host community). If so, be sure to use two different types of marks, such as a check (✓) for your home community, and an "X" for your host community.

EXAMPLE:

To whom does an individual have *primary* responsibility?



To himself or herself personally.

To other people such as family members or close friends.

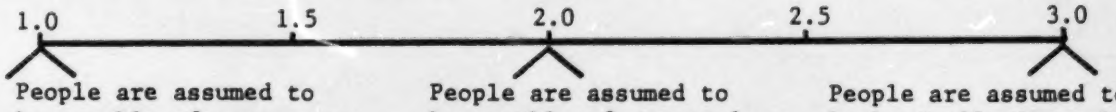
To a Supreme Being or philosophic ideal.

If you think that, on the whole, people in your home community act as though their primary responsibility is to their family members and/or close friends, you would check the continuum at the point 2.0. If you think that they act as though their primary responsibility is somewhat to themselves personally, and somewhat to other people, you would check the continuum somewhere in the vicinity of 1.5. *Note that you are free to check the continuum at <u>any</u> point, not merely at those points that are described or labeled with numbers.*

Keep in mind that the purpose of this exercise is to identify fifteen *central tendencies* in the value orientations of your home community (and perhaps in another community), and to locate each of them on a continuum that represents *the range of possibilities available to human beings at all times and places.* You are likely, therefore, to have to s t r e t c h your imagination to consider values that are exceedingly different from your own, but equally useful and meaningful to people living in another place and/or at another time.

I. THE INDIVIDUAL

- I/1 To what extent are people *generally assumed* capable of personal improvement?

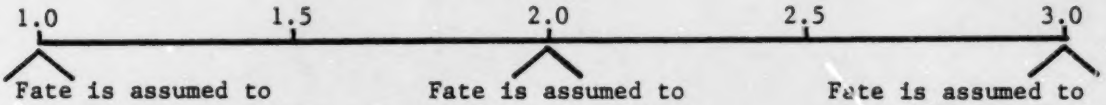


People are assumed to be capable of enormous personal development and improvement.

People are assumed to be capable of personal growth and development to a limited extent.

People are assumed to be basically incapable of achieving personal growth or improvement.

- I/2 What do individuals *tend* to assume about the role of fate (chance) in their lives?

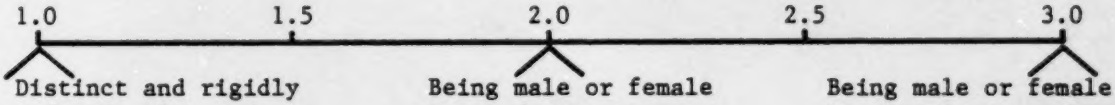


Fate is assumed to have little or no importance; individuals assume that they are very largely masters of their own destinies and can influence future events.

Fate is assumed to play a moderate role in an individual's life, but the individual is assumed to exercise *some* control over his or her own destiny.

Fate is assumed to play a major role in an individual's life; individuals assume that they have little or no control over their own destinies.

- I/3 What effect does one's sex *tend* to have on one's roles and responsibilities in the family, among friends and coworkers, and in society?

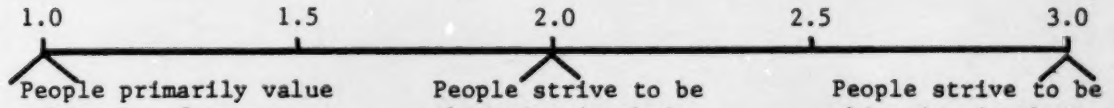


Distinct and rigidly defined roles and responsibilities are assumed because one is male or female; rarely is there any overlap in expectations of the two sexes.

Being male or female has moderate power to determine one's roles and responsibilities, but one's interests and abilities are also taken into account.

Being male or female has little or nothing to do with the roles and responsibilities that one assumes in the family, among coworkers and friends, and in society.

- I/4 What is the *most generally approved* procedure by which people arrive at conclusions and make decisions?

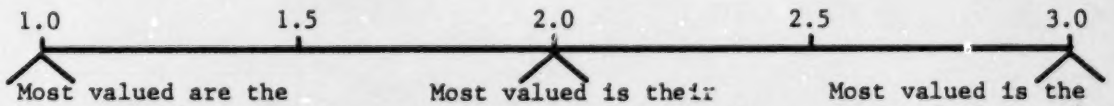


People primarily value subjective factors (such as emotion, personal preference, intuition, or Divine guidance) in arriving at decisions and conclusions.

People strive to be objective in their thinking; they bring together relevant information (facts, statistics, expert opinions, etc.) bearing on the issue, then allow a decision to emerge ("inductive reasoning").

People strive to be objective in their thinking; they seek general theories or first principles bearing on the issue, then arrive at a decision through application of logical thought ("deductive reasoning").

- I/5 What is *primarily* valued and respected in individuals?

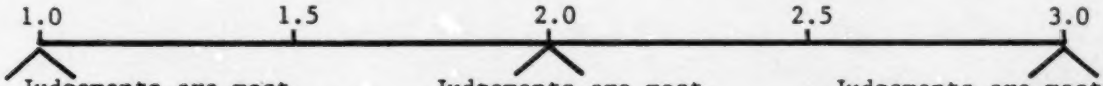


Most valued are the skills they've learned and their individual achievements in life.

Most valued is their background in terms of membership in or descent from a certain family.

Most valued is the depth of their relationship to a Supreme Being or commitment to a philosophic ideal.

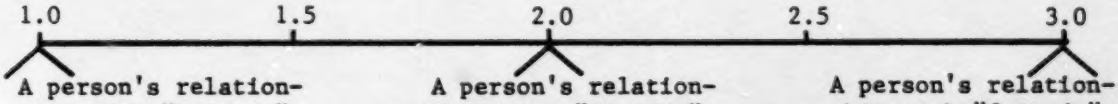
- I/6 On what basis do people *most often* judge procedures, events, and ideas?



1.0	2.0	3.0
Judgements are most often made on the basis of practical considerations (by asking "Does it accomplish a needed task? Does it work well?").	Judgements are most often made on the basis of ethical considerations (by asking "Is it right? Is it just? Is it good?").	Judgements are most often made on the basis of congruence with tradition (by asking "Is it similar to the ways preferred by our ancestors?").

II. SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- II/1 What type of relationship with others *tends* to be suggested by the terms "friend" and "friendship"?

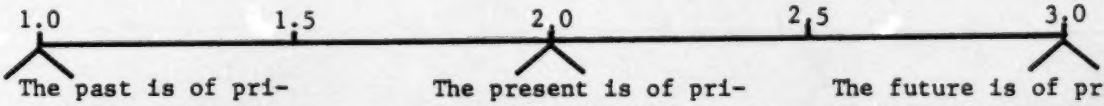


1.0	2.0	3.0
A person's relationship with "friends" is intense, intimate, long-lasting (usually for a lifetime), and involves numerous mutual obligations that are keenly felt and unlimited in scope; a person has very few "friends."	A person's relationship with "friends" is moderately intense and intimate, and may last for short or long periods; mutual obligations are moderate in scope and depth; a person has a modest number of "friends."	A person's relationship with "friends" is *comparatively* superficial and often depends on overlapping interests; mutual obligations are limited and weak; a person has very many "friends" at any one time, but few or none that last throughout his life.

- II/2 How are personal disagreements and conflicts *usually* dealt with?

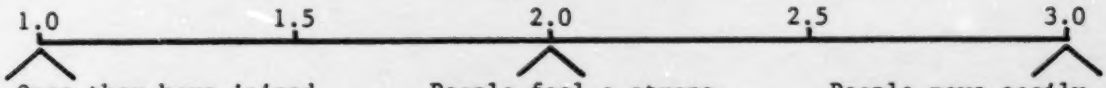
1.0	2.0	3.0
Conflicts and disagreements are ignored, played down, or suppressed so that they are very rarely dealt with openly or directly.	Intermediaries (go-betweens) such as mutual friends are very often used by people in their efforts to resolve conflicts and disagreements.	People in conflict with each other often attempt to work out their differences in face-to-face discussion or other direct contact with each other.

- II/3 What is the *primary* orientation of people with respect to time?



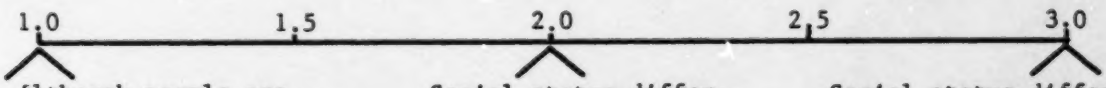
1.0	2.0	3.0
The past is of primary interest and importance.	The present is of primary interest and importance.	The future is of primary interest and importance.

- II/4 To what degree do people *tend* to remain loyal to groups and organizations?



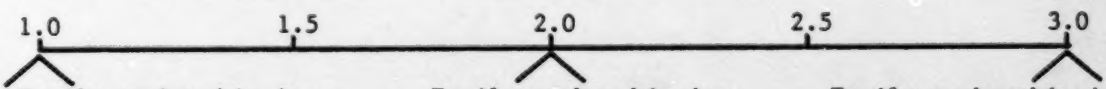
1.0	2.0	3.0
Once they have joined an organization, people feel a deep sense of loyalty to it, so that even if their personal goals remain unfulfilled, they remain members or employees indefinitely.	People feel a strong sense of loyalty to *some* organizations, but in the case of others they will remain members or employees only as long as their personal goals are fulfilled.	People move easily from one organization to another during their lifetime; their loyalty to any specific organization depends heavily on whether their personal goals are fulfilled by being members or employees.

- II/5 How do people *usually* relate to others of higher or lower social status?



1.0	2.0	3.0
Although people are aware of differences in social status, they ignore or play down such differences in almost all their relationships with others; informality prevails almost all the time.	Social status differences are moderately important in social relationships; in a few situations, very formal or ritualized behavior is observed when higher and lower status people meet.	Social status differences carry great weight in almost all social relationships; in most situations, formality or ritual governs behavior when higher and lower status people are together.

- II/6 To what extent do people *tend* to feel bound or obligated by their membership in a particular family or clan?

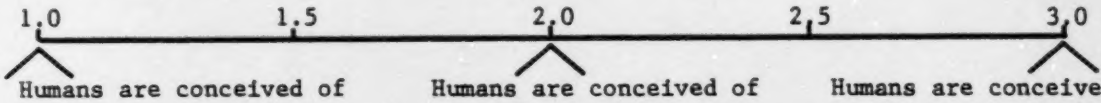


1.0	2.0	3.0
Family membership involves very few binding obligations; after coming of age, an individual tends to be free to pursue his own interests, and can expect little direct support from family members.	Family membership involves *some* binding obligations; after coming of age, an individual is only partially free to pursue his own interests because to some extent he is part of a mutual support network based in his family or clan.	Family membership involves numerous binding obligations that continue unabated throughout one's lifetime; but an individual also is expected to call at any time on his family or clan network for aid, comfort, and advice.

.../...

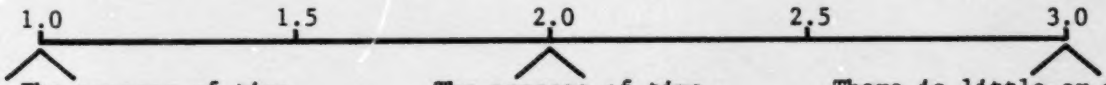
III. NATURE AND THE SUPERNATURAL

- III/1 How does the interaction between humans and nature *tend* to be conceived?



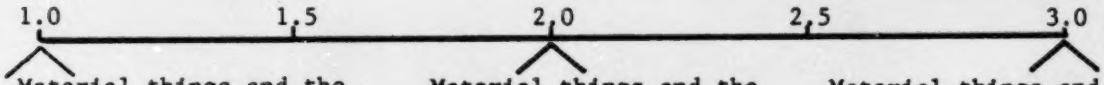
1.0	2.0	3.0
Humans are conceived of as having the right to attempt to control the natural world and to exploit it for their benefit and progress.	Humans are conceived of as having an obligation to live in ecological balance with nature, or as being an integral part of nature destined to live in harmony with all other parts.	Humans are conceived of as being subordinate to nature, and as being powerless in the face of overwhelming natural forces that forever will remain beyond their control.

- III/3 How does time *tend* to be defined and valued?



1.0	2.0	3.0
The passage of time is keenly sensed; because its passage is thought to occur very rapidly, time is valued as a limited resource that ought not to be wasted.	The passage of time is sensed to *some* extent, but the speed with which it passes is not a matter for concern, and there is little or no feeling that time is valuable or can be "wasted."	There is little or no consciousness of the "passage of time," except perhaps in terms of the changing seasons; to the extent that time is sensed at all, it is thought of as unlimited or as occurring in large chunks.

- III/3 To what extent are material things and the fruits of human progress *assumed* to be available to human beings?



1.0	2.0	3.0
Material things and the fruits of progress are assumed to exist in strictly limited supply, so that only a few people can enjoy them; most people are destined to endure sadness and poverty throughout their lives, and there is nothing they can do to change their condition.	Material things and the fruits of progress are assumed to exist in moderately abundant supply, so that only *some* people can enjoy them; those who are most able and who work the hardest can hope to gain happiness and well-being.	Material things and the fruits of progress are assumed to exist, at least potentially, in virtually unlimited supply, so that almost everyone can enjoy them; happiness and well-being can be attained by all who strive to gain them.

Developed in 1982 by:
Cornelius Lee Grove, Ed.D.
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AFS International

LEADER'S GUIDE

FOR

THE VALUE ORIENTATIONS EXERCISE

developed in 1982 by

Cornelius Lee Grove, Ed.D.
Director of Research
AFS International/Intercultural Programs

Objectives:

- To enable participants to become more fully aware of the nature of culture and of cultural differences;
- To increase participants' understanding of the range of differences between and among cultures; and
- To improve the skill of participants at correctly identifying the predominant values of their own home culture (or of some other culture).

Leader's Preparation: The leader of this training exercise should be a member of the culture being discussed, but one who has developed an outsider's or anthropologist's perspective on the culture; such a perspective may be gained by periods of sojourning in different cultures and/or through extensive reading of appropriate works of anthropology, sociology, cross-cultural studies, and so forth.

Leader's Materials: The leader must have a copy of the 6-page Value Orientations worksheet. He or she also should have a blackboard and chalk, or a flipchart and marking pens.

Participants' Materials: Each participant must have a copy of the 6-page Value Orientations worksheet. Participants also could be supplied with pencils.

Space Requirements: For groups larger than six people, sufficient spaces are required so that subgroups of four to six people each can meet in comfort and relative privacy.

Time Requirements: Not less than three hours, structured as follows:

15 minutes: Introduction

75 minutes: Small group discussions

15 minutes: Break with refreshments

75 minutes: Plenary group discussion

Background Information:

The intellectual origins of this exercise can be traced to (1) F. Kluckholn & F.L. Strodtbeck, *Variations in Value Orientations*, 1961, and (2) E.C. Stewart, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, 1971, recently republished by The Intercultural Press of Yarmouth, ME. It is a variation of the contrast-culture (or contrast-American) technique associated with E.C. Stewart; for another variation, see A.J. Kraemer, *Development of a Cultural Self-Awareness Approach to Instruction in Intercultural Communication*, 1973, distributed by National Technical Information Center of Springfield, VA -- order # AD 765 486).

A 25-item version of the Value Orientations exercise may be found in the *AFS Orientation Handbook: Volume I*, 1981 (distributed by The Intercultural Press). The present 15-item version was developed primarily because it had been found that training groups never were able to complete the 25-item version; minor modifications also were introduced in the present version. Even with only 15 items, the exercise often cannot be completed in three hours due to the intensity of discussion among participants. Two two-hour sessions make it more likely that all 15 items can be discussed in subgroups and plenary.

Suggestions for Use:

The Value Orientations exercise has been used successfully with older adolescents and adults. It was developed primarily as a pre-departure exercise to assist participants in improving their cultural self-awareness before travelling to the host culture. It also has been used with host nationals (relative to their home culture) who will be teaching or working with sojourners, immigrants, and other expatriates. Still another use is with sojourners who have been living in the host culture for a significant length of time -- probably not less than six months -- to help them sharpen their understanding of the host culture and its differences from their respective home cultures.

An especially valuable procedure is for participants to complete the Value Orientations exercise prior to departure from the home country, and to take their completed worksheets with them to the host country. After about six months, the exercise is repeated; the object is for each participant to locate the host culture on each of the 15 scales *and* to examine his former placement of the home culture on each scale to notice the differences and to determine if he has altered his perceptions of the *home* culture since living in the host culture.

PROCEDURES:

Step 1: INTRODUCTION

Ask participants to read the six paragraphs on the first page of the 6-page worksheet. Take steps to insure that all participants understand the major concepts presented there.

Instruct the participants to study the directions and the example on the second page of the worksheet. Take steps to insure that all understand what they are being asked to do.

If your group of participants is larger than six, divide them into subgroups of four to six participants each. Assign each subgroup to a space where they can meet in relative privacy.

Members of each subgroup should attempt to agree on the placement of their home (or host) culture on each of the 15 scales. If agreement is not reached fairly readily on any item, they should agree to disagree and move on to the next item. Discussing all 15 items in the allotted time is more important for the success of this exercise than reaching complete agreement on any particular item.

Step 2: SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

In accordance with the guidelines given in the immediately preceding paragraph, the small groups discuss and attempt to agree upon each of the 15 items. As leader, you may wish to circulate among the small groups during this time.

Step 3: BREAK WITH REFRESHMENTS

Step 4: PLENARY GROUP DISCUSSION

This step will not be necessary if you did not divide your participants into small groups.

The objectives of the plenary discussion are two:

1. To enable the small groups to report their decisions regarding the placement of the home (or host) culture on each of the 15 scales; and
2. To enable you, as an especially knowledgeable person concerning the culture in question, to state where anthropologists, sociologists, and other social scientists would place the culture on each of the scales.

In the course of attaining these two objectives, spirited discussions are likely to occur. Keep in mind that the occurrence of these discussions is more important than the reaching of complete agreement on any item.

Since I expect this exercise to be used frequently in the United States of America, I will state here what I believe to be the general consensus of anthropologists, sociologists, and cross-cultural researchers regarding the placement of the U.S.A. on each of the 15 scales. (A narrow range is stated in each case.)

I. The Individual

I/1: 1.0 - 1.5
I/2: 1.0 - 1.5
I/3: 1.5 - 2.0 (note 1)
I/4: 1.5 - 2.0
I/5: 1.0 - 1.5
I/6: 1.0 - 2.0 (note 2)

II. Social Relationships

II/1: 2.5 - 3.0
II/2: 2.5 - 3.0
II/3: 2.0 - 2.5 (note 3)
II/4: 2.5 - 3.0
II/5: 1.0 - 1.5
II/6: 1.0 - 1.5

III. Nature and the Supernatural

III/1: 1.0 - 2.0 (note 4)
III/2: 1.0 - 1.5
III/3: 2.5 - 3.0

Note 1: Obviously, the norms regarding sex roles are changing in U.S. society at this time. The location of the U.S.A. on this scale is moving slowly to the right. Furthermore, a considerable gap exists between the actual practice of many people (1.0 - 1.5) and the ideals of others (2.5 - 3.0).

Note 2: The tendencies described under both 1.0 (pragmatism) and 2.0 (puritanism) continue to be strongly valued in U.S. society. What is clear is that 3.0 (traditionalism) is scarcely valued at all.

Note 3: In relation to certain Oriental cultures, our view of the future tends to be rather restricted, being confined to a decade or two instead of hundreds of years. In this light, I think 2.0 - 2.5 is more accurate than 2.5 - 3.0.

Note 4: The norms regarding the relationship of humans with nature are changing in U.S. society at this time. The location of the U.S.A. on this scale is moving slowly to the right, from 1.0 towards 2.0.